



- Nearly half of soldiers with a history of suicide reported that their first attempt happened before enrollment. (www.usnews.com)
- Soldiers with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) were also more likely to have onset prior to enlistment. (www.archpsyc.jamanetwork.com)
- Approximately one-third of post-enlistment suicide attempts tied back to pre-enlistment mental disorders. (www.newstribune.com)

Facts and Figures

Lifetime Prevalence of Suicidal Behavior in the April to December 2011 Army STARRS AAS

Table 1. Lifetime Prevalence of Suicidal Behavior in the April to December 2011 Army STARRS AAS

Variable	% (SE) of Soldiers						
	Total Sample (N = 5428)			Lifetime Ideators			
	Ideation	Plan	Attempt	Plan	Attempt	Attempt by Those With a Plan	Attempt by Those Without a Plan
Lifetime prevalence							
Total	13.9 (0.4)	5.3 (0.4)	2.4 (0.2)	38.5 (2.6)	17.1 (1.2)	34.4 (2.3)	6.3 (1.1)
Men	12.9 (0.5)	4.8 (0.5)	2.1 (0.2)	37.3 (3.3)	16.0 (1.1)	33.5 (2.9)	5.6 (1.0)
Women	19.9 (1.5)	8.6 (1.1)	4.3 (0.8)	43.2 (4.9)	21.5 (3.6)	37.6 (5.7)	9.3 (3.8)
Lifetime cases with pre-enlistment onsets							
Total	58.2 (2.1)	52.9 (4.1)	47.0 (5.6)	52.9 (4.1)	47.0 (5.6)	50.6 (6.7)	34.4 (2.7)
Men	58.3 (2.8)	54.9 (3.9)	49.8 (5.7)	54.9 (3.9)	49.8 (5.7)	54.5 (6.4)	33.1 (2.6)
Women	57.6 (4.2)	45.9 (11.5)	38.6 (8.1)	45.9 (11.5)	38.6 (8.1)	38.8 (10.7)	37.7 (2.0)

Abbreviations: AAS, All-Army Survey; Army STARRS, Army Study to Assess Risk and Resilience in Servicemembers.

archpsyc.jamanetwork.com

Clinician's Corner:

Soldiers' Suicide Risk Often Starts Before Boot Camp

Among U.S. Army troops with suicidal behaviors and other mental problems, large fractions reported having mental problems before they joined up, according to a large survey. For example, about half of soldiers who indicated that they tried to take their own lives at some point said they had first attempted suicide before enlistment, according to Robert J. Ursano, MD, of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Md., and colleagues.

Pre-enlistment mental disorders explained some 31% of the risk for first suicide attempts made during army service, whereas disorders with post-enlistment onset explained about 41%, the researchers reported online in JAMA Psychiatry. Also, among active-duty soldiers meeting standard criteria for one or more psychiatric conditions, three-quarters reported an onset of symptoms before enlistment.

[Soldiers' Suicide Risk Often Starts Before Boot Camp](#)

Check out these publications for more information. . .

"Suicide in the military - don't blame deployments" A new study points to risk and protective factors (www.newstribune.com)

"Suicidal Tendencies Are Evident Before Deployment" (www.nytimes.com)

"High rate of mental illness in recruits" Nearly 1 in 5 soldiers was afflicted before enlisting (articles.latimes.com)

"Positive Mental Health: Resilience" (www.childtrend.org)



If you have any questions about this publication or would like to set up a training please contact Michelle Kelly, PSA at michelle.kelly2@va.gov

Save the Date:

VA Information Table **March 26th, 2014**
Minneapolis VA
1st floor, central elevators
Michelle.kelly2@va.gov

MN Center for Mental Health Conference: Advancing Clinical Practices **March 27th, 2014**
Earle Brown Heritage Center
www.umn.edu

Suicide Awareness Class **April, 24th, 2014**
Minneapolis VA
4T-112, 8:00am—9:00Am